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ABSTRACT

For training to be successful, the trainer must understand the people he teaches. This booklet describes the individual characteristics and motivation of the disadvantaged trainee and discusses the special problems he faces. This knowledge of the environment and psychological factors affecting the disadvantaged trainee can help the instructor make training a success. (BH)

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and the Disadvantaged

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TRAINING THE DISADVANTAGED

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NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE LEAGUE

A public personnel system that is responsive to and relevant to its times . . . work for this ideal has been the National Civil Service League's mission since it started in 1818. The NCSL organized to halt the rampant corruption produced by the patronage system of government appointments.

When a disgruntled office seeker killed President James A. Garfield in 1881 the country became as alarmed as the national leaders—such as Theodore Roosevelt and Carl Schurz—who founded the NCSL. Spurred by NCSL leadership, Congress passed the first national civil service law—a law drafted by the League—which decreed that public appointments were to be made according to the applicants' merits.

Over the years, the League has fought for better government via the installation of the merit system nationwide. Today we point proudly to the 36 state governments plus hundreds of cities and counties which now hire according to merit.

The League continues to serve as a chief spokesman and mentor of the merit system. We stand for it, and we speak to its flexibility to meet public challenges and to provide a public personnel system that is truly relevant to today!

In recent months, the League has turned its attention to two areas of national concern: the growing shortage of personnel for government jobs, and the need of the disadvantaged for meaningful, "real" jobs. The League believes that each of these problems carries the other's solution. Yet civil service systems often seem designed purposely to frustrate the hiring of would-be employees.

The League believes that rules and regulations designed to facilitate the merit system in the 1890's or the 1930's do not necessarily serve the 1970's. Further, the League knows that many jurisdictions around the country—state, county and city—want to revise their personnel structures to fit today. But how, and in what direction?

It is to provide such leadership relevant to this age that the League developed a new project: Public Employment and the Disadvantaged. The League is working with public and private leaders in cities, counties and states to help bring the disadvantaged into public employ.

JANUARY, 1970

The writing and publication of this article constitute part of a League project, Public Employment and the Disadvantaged, which is financed by a contract with the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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TRAINING THE DISADVANTAGED

INTRODUCTION

A primary obstacle to effective on-the-job-training-for-advancement has been the tendency of supervisors and professionals to ignore their responsibility for training: they were more comfortable doing familiar work rather than training others to do it. Relatively few supervisors, technicians or professionals have been trained to train; even fewer are skilled at analyzing tasks and structuring them for training. Because they often regard responsibility for training as a burden, few professionals and supervisors experience the very personal rewards that come to a successful teacher.

A professional, technician or supervisor can learn to teach a job to a trainee one element at a time. For such learning to occur successfully, those imparting the skills must know much about the people they are dealing with. They must understand the special problems facing trainees, and recognize the intensity of such factors.

THE TRAINEE POPULATION

Though many people who are called upon to train the disadvantaged are very knowledgeable about their trainees, and some may come from disadvantaged backgrounds themselves, the following paragraphs highlight some general characteristics of these trainees, to help identify special training techniques and related methods which are of value. The list of points is not exhaustive, but deals with the principal ones to consider.

Living in Conditions of Economic Poverty

Low incomes may preclude favorable off-the-job learning conditions or the remedying of health problems which impede learning. Trainees may be living in extremely crowded conditions—with neither space nor quiet for outside reading. Poor nutrition may also be the cause of some students' apathy, short attention span and sleepiness. Other physical handicaps, including poor vision or hearing which they cannot afford to correct, may exist and impair the trainees' learning.

Implications: The employing organization might set aside facilities for reading, study and conversation, or suggest public facilities such as a library or community center. Physical handicaps should be diagnosed by competent professionals and corrected; where the employee does not have corrective capability, we suggest referral to a social agency.

Culturally Deprived

One national survey revealed that, to a remarkable degree, the less educated people participated least in educational and cultural pursuits and various life experiences which seem so common to others. Social workers have found that many people living in slum areas of big cities have never been more than a few blocks from their homes. Community residents may be completely unaware of the existence of nearby libraries, museums and other free sources of cultural enrichment. Often, people who know that cultural centers exist are afraid to enter them; they feel they will not know "how to act," that their poor clothing will make them conspicuous, and that those in charge will look down on them.

In like manner, many disadvantaged persons have not learned to read bus schedules or telephone directories. They may be unaware of a city's layout, of the public transportation system which serves the city, and of the availability of maps and schedules which explain them.

Implications: A trainee may be lost before he ever starts (literally and figuratively) because of a lack of know-how, discouragement or helplessness; these factors, rather than unreliability, may account for a trainee's failure to keep an appointment. The instructor's sensitivity to such problems and willingness to help, often beyond the confines of the training situation, can contribute immeasurably to the success of many trainees.

Values, Attitudes, and Goals Differing from Upper and Middle Class Norms

Under-educated persons, youth and adult, may have value systems which differ widely from those of upper- and middle-income adults. Indifference, or even hostility, toward social institutions such as education is common.

Implications: The trainer should work with, rather than fight, the values and attitudes held by disadvantaged trainees. Strong opposition is not the way to change such values—nor is changing them always advisable. Criticism of the trainee's values and attitudes will more than likely have one result: the student will stop participating.

"How many teachers and supervisors know or have taken the time to try to find out what it is really like to be a person from the kind of home and community in which disadvantaged youths find themselves?" Rosemary Wilson, Assistant Director, Curriculum Office, School District of Philadelphia, asks: "Could some of our limited success in teaching be the result of failure to understand their problems and concerns?"[1] Mrs. Wilson poses the following questions to help people place themselves imaginatively in the shoes of their trainees:

"What is it like never to hear standard English spoken in your home or community?
"What is it like never to have had a newspaper, book or magazine in your home?
"What is it like never to have seen anyone in your home write anything?
"What is it like never to have had anyone tell you a story or read to you when you were little?
"What is it like never to have had anyone speak to you except in terms of abuse?
"What is it like never to have traveled more than a few blocks from your home?"

A supervisor or professional who provides training for the disadvantaged may meet a surprising number of individuals who could answer "what it's like."

Need for Status

Because disadvantaged adults have rarely experienced success, either as children in school or in their work or social activities since leaving school, they often feel inadequate, unable to learn and compete.

Implications: The instructor must know the importance of **helping the trainees experience success** from the very beginning of training. He should be sure that the learning activities are not too difficult for the students. He should not arbitrarily set standards of student achievement, for if the standards prove too demanding for the student, the student will feel anxious because he cannot meet them. Ideally, the trainer and trainee will work together in deciding, realistically, what can be achieved. Within reason, the trainer should allow each trainee to set his own pace in approaching tasks. One way the trainer may do this is to offer a principal task or assignment and suggest other activities which can be done instead of, or in addition to, the principal assignment.

Whenever possible, the use of school-type facilities or methods should be questioned. Frequently, a trainee may exhibit fear of school-type situations. The trainee's past experience with school may have been unpleasant; he may have been placed in a class because of his physical size rather than his ability, or ridiculed by a teacher or classmate because of his inferior clothing or his inability to attend regularly. Other trainees' fears, associated with the fear of school, are those of being taught information incompatible with what has been taught at home, being tested, and being publicly exposed as a failure.

The trainer must avoid—at all costs—use of ridicule or sarcasm with underprivileged youth and adults. "Accentuate the positive" is a slogan every trainer would do well to repeat to himself every day. The trainer must alleviate the student's super-sensitive fear of making mistakes and having them exposed or ridiculed; he must concentrate on what the student does right.

A trainee also gets a feeling of status from the way he is addressed. The instructor who begins training by using first names, nicknames and words such as "boy" may quickly arouse antagonism and resentment; he should use formal address ("Mr. Jones") until confidence and warmth are established. Early in the training, the instructor can learn from the students how each likes to be addressed, and how he feels most comfortable in addressing the instructor. Some trainees will prefer the friendly informality of nicknames, for both themselves and the instructor. Others will enjoy the dignity of being called "Mr. Jones," "Mrs. Lewis," or "Miss Green."

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[1] *Improving English Skills of Culturally Different Youth*, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C. 20202. Bulletin No. 5, 1964.

Feeling of Helplessness

When a trainee doubts that he possesses ability to learn, his thinking process is blocked or retarded; he begins to feel anxious and helpless. Some signs of helpless feelings in students are hostility expressed toward subject matter, absence of participation and attention, procrastination or "forgetting," and inability to start or continue the work alone.

Implications: The instructor, upon analyzing a student's behavior, should be able to identify signs of helplessness exhibited by trainees. Instead of reacting negatively toward behaviors expressing helplessness (for many of them *can* be annoying), the instructor's goal is to build in the student a feeling of self-confidence.

Facing the Problem of Developing a Success Pattern for the Disadvantaged

What is possible? Here is how Lou LaBrant, Dillard University, New Orleans, attempted to answer that question:

> "Certainly not all of the culturally different will achieve to an equal degree. Some . . . will achieve little more than minimal abilities and understandings. They will find their counterparts in the larger group, the non-different, since there is a certain percentage of dull ones in any group. Probably for another generation, we may expect a larger percentage of poor achievers from the differently cultured, but that is an uncertain matter depending on the seriousness with which we attack the problem. Others will, however, achieve fame and fortune. We have only to look over the names of political, social and artistic leaders today to know that they include many who were or are culturally different. Some have probably succeeded because of their very difficulties and differences. Our aim is to shorten the period of difficulties as rapidly as possible. If, in so doing, we also retain those differences which have social value—and certainly there are such—our society will be the richer."[2]

"Live for Today" Outlook

Many people from lower socio-economic backgrounds have little concept of long-range planning in their lives. Because of chronic shortages of resources and powerlessness to protect any possible gains or to affect the whims of fate, they have not learned to do something today for a possible benefit in the future.

Implications: The "live for today" outlook of trainees means that their motivation to learn must be based on immediate rewards. The trainee must experience success today. To put it in even more practical terms, every student should be readily able to accomplish something new—no matter how simple—during the first instructional session.

Psychological Aspects

The feeling of personal worth among disadvantaged youth and adults is frequently low because of a life history of failure to achieve many generally accepted values of success, efficiency, practicality, work and equality. The disadvantaged trainee often is easily discouraged and frequently exhibits an attitude of almost complete resignation because of repeated failures. The trainer, while providing the training necessary for the student to perform new tasks, must also endeavor to help the trainee create an improved self-image. The trainer's understanding of psychological aspects related to the training of disadvantaged trainees can be very helpful in helping the trainee achieve a new self-image.

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[2] *Improving English Skills of Culturally Different Youth.* U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C. 20202, Bulletin No. 5, 1964.

• **Short Interest Span:** For a variety of physical (perhaps even nutritional) and psychological reasons, disadvantaged trainees often find it difficult to concentrate on instruction for long periods of time, particularly if such training requires continuous concentration.

Implications: "Active" methods of teaching are most effective: use of role playing (students "acting out" interviews, for example), small group discussion methods and other participative learning activities. Because disadvantaged trainees often have low aptitudes for reading, the reading materials offered should be closely related to everyday interests.

"Fatigue will probably discourage your student and you can help him avoid it," states a booklet for teachers published by the Montgomery County (Maryland) Literacy Council. "Most of what he does while working with you will be unfamiliar to him and will require special effort. This includes the physical inactivity of sitting through films, as well as the mental effort of concentrating on strange symbols. Take frequent short 'breaks.' Introduce variety in your lesson plan. Try 'learning games.' Enjoy some humor together. Help make the training sessions something to look forward to because the trainee is learning, because they are fun, because you like each other, and because he is getting a better feeling about himself."

Frequent switching between training and practice (if the practice periods are long enough) provides reinforcement of learning and often keeps interest high.

• **Tendency to Lose Interest:** The disadvantaged adult or youth, just like average adult students, will leave a situation which does not fulfill his needs. When signs of apathy appear, it is time for the trainer to muster all his teaching skill and understanding. He must try to determine the problem, to see both his and the trainee's part in the difficulty.

Implications: The trainer should consider these measures:

—Personal Interview. After class or during a "break," the trainer can let the student know of his concern and interest in him and his work. A friendly, informal conversation over a cup of coffee may bring out the problem and enable the reaching of a workable solution.

—Guidance counseling. Every trainer does a certain amount of guidance counseling, consciously or otherwise. But if the situation calls for someone with special training in that field, the trainer can refer the trainee for professional help, usually to a state or local government source. The trainer can reassure the student, if necessary, that a visit to a counselor is recommended because the counselor is better qualified to answer some technical questions, and that a visit to a counselor in no way sets the trainee apart from the rest of his group.

—Private tutoring. Tutoring is an "above and beyond the call of duty" measure, yet it is frequently done. A few "after class" sessions with a trainee often can totally eliminate a problem and reverse a tendency for the trainee to drop out of training.

—Standard setting. The trainer should help the trainee set realistic standards, pinpoint those areas in which the person excels, and help him realize that satisfaction gained from competence in some areas makes up for average, or less than average, abilities in others.

—Information sharing. The trainer should share with his trainees the plan for the entire program, so they will know what is going on and what they can expect. Frequently, the trainees may make suggestions and offer ideas which will change the plan and make it more useful and workable for them.

—Informal survey. An informal discussion among trainees, in "buzz groups," of questions such as indicated below, followed by class discussion of the results, will often indicate to the trainer how he is meeting his group's needs and interests. The trainer might conduct a discussion of this kind when he wants feedback about the effectiveness of instruction. The trainer should encourage the students to express themselves freely in their anonymous groups; the trainees should be told that the purpose of the "buzz groups" is to help the instructor give them the kind of information they want and need.

Possible "Buzz Group" Questions

Have you ever thought of dropping out of this group? If so, why?
Does the instruction meet your needs? If not, please give your reasons.
Do you feel that there is friction among the people in your group? If so, why?
Do you find the classwork difficult or is it too easy? If so, why?
If you dropped out, how would you feel about it if the trainer telephoned you or wrote you a letter?
—I would think it none of his business.
—It would be o.k., but I would probably have a hard time telling him the real reason.
—I would be glad to know that I was missed.
—Other thoughts I might have are . . .
Do you find the material interesting or dull? Why?
What other training would you like to receive? Why?

• **Communications:** Under-educated people are forced to communicate, in part, on the non-verbal level, because they have limited vocabularies and limited skill in articulation. They are extremely sensitive to non-verbal clues that other people project; consequently, they tend to judge more by action than by words.

Implications: The trainer must realize that he may say one thing verbally, while non-verbally (through facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice) saying another. The disadvantaged student will respond more strongly to the non-verbal message because almost instinctively he knows it is real—not "put on," as words can be. Few people are aware of how much non-verbal communication they engage in and to what degree their true subconscious feelings come out that way. These subconscious responses, such as fear, hostility and contempt, may be particularly strong when dealing with people with cultural differences.

• **Reticence:** Many disadvantaged people have difficulty expressing their feelings, discussing their needs and standing up for their rights. When someone asks them questions, their silence does not necessarily mean that they do not know the answer or are not willing to give it. Their silence may mean that they are shy about speaking in groups; that no one has ever before shown an interest in them as individuals and they don't know how to cope with it; or that in other situations when they expressed their feelings or stood up for their rights, they received a reaction which caused them to regret their openness.

Implications: One way to encourage free expression is to break the class into small groups for discussion; some who sit silently in large groups will open up and talk in a group of two or three.

• **Negative Behavior:** Ways that are acceptable—sometimes even praiseworthy —in the home or neighborhoods of the disadvantaged, are often difficult for other personnel to accept. Offensive language, so called "immoral" ways of life, "acting out" behavior (breaking the law, violence), often make others critical—either openly or silently. This overt or silent criticism sets up a serious barrier between the instructor and the trainee. It alienates the trainee not only from the instructor, but also from the learning situation.

Implications: There are often valid reasons underlying a trainee's negative behavior. The trainer must look for the positive qualities and potentials of the human being who is hiding behind this unacceptable behavior. Instead of being struck by the shortcomings of his students, the instructor should concentrate on the fact that, despite their handicaps, they succeed as well as they do.

• **Use of Defense Mechanisms:** The higher the person's inadequacy of educational background, the more likely he is to attempt to hide deficiencies from his friends, and even his instructor, by the use of defense mechanisms. An illiterate trainee, for example, may resort to: a) carrying a book or newspaper, b) carrying pencils in a conspicuous place, c) not having eyeglasses when asked to read, d) citing an "injury to the writing hand" when asked for written response, or e) exhibiting an extremely well-developed oral expression with a reasonably large vocabulary.

Implications: The instructor who is aware of a trainee's defense mechanisms may, in the foregoing example, respond as follows: "Well, it's not important that we read this immediately. But we might just see if there are any of these words you can recognize, even without your glasses," or "I'm sorry to hear that you injured your hand. Let's just talk this time."

• **Hostility Toward Authority:** If the student has had unhappy associations in the past with representatives of authority (policemen, the "boss" on the job, parents who treated him with cruelty or indifference, or even teachers), he is likely to have hidden or overt hostility upon meeting any new authority figure.

Implications: The trainer must project himself as a friend or guide, rather than as a teacher-authoritarian. However, since disadvantaged youth and adults—initially at least—rarely view instructors as friends, just acting friendly will not reassure the students. The instructor may have to run the gamut of hostility and defensiveness for quite a while before his "niceness" is perceived as honest.

• **Varying Levels of Intelligence:** Disadvantaged people are under-educated, not necessarily low in intelligence.

Implications: The instructor can learn something about his students' past educational experiences by reviewing their trainee records. In some cases, records may include information (test scores, for example) regarding the students' abilities to learn. Indicators of past performance, however, are of doubtful validity in the case of disadvantaged trainees. Part of this group's basic problem is that they often have not performed well in situations structured by people from different backgrounds. Reliance on tests and records, therefore, may do actual harm, if the information is allowed to bias the instructor's expectations and cause him to gloss over students' potentials and the need for creative approaches to training disadvantaged trainees. For this reason, the instructor should also employ in the training situation on-the-spot ways of identifying individual intellectual differences in the group. Several techniques are described here:

—Student discussion after a film, trainee report, or other non-participative experience: The trainer may notice that one student absorbed almost all the main facts or concepts covered, while another noted only a few isolated facts, or none at all. Student behavior in discussing the experience may help the trainer find some clues as to why those differences exist.

—Participation in training. By observing the application of abilities by trainees in the training situation, the instructor will gain insight into students' intellectual potentials. To assure such evaluation of all trainees, the instructor should plan training experiences which elicit behavior by each student.

—Private conference. By using personal interviews, the trainer can review learning difficulties and problems which interfere with learning. Information obtained often will help the instructor adjust the training content and approach to meet students' needs.

• **Motivation:** Most adults who are involved in learning activities have one thing in common: they don't have to be there (so they can leave whenever they like). So the trainer must motivate, interest and retain his trainees. If the training drags . . . if the teaching techniques are dated or boring . . . if the trainer doesn't grab and maintain the interest of all of his trainees, he may find himself without participants in the program.

Motivation probably is the most basic element of learning. Motivation makes a trainee *want* to know, understand, believe, act, and gain a skill. The trainer must recognize the importance of motivation and find ways to bring motivation factors into the learning process. Some motivation factors are the need for security, the need for new experience, the need for recognition, the need for self-esteem, the need for conformity, and the need to help others.

The disadvantaged adult may have a goal entirely different from that which the trainer sets for him. For example, a trainee may have enrolled because a buddy asked him to join (companionship), while the trainer has set a goal for him based on the subject matter. It is important that each understand the goals set up by the other. This is why so many successful trainers adopt the policy of joint instructor-student planning in selecting goals. Each knows, through that process, what the other expects of him.

Experienced trainers use many different methods to motivate their students, but they are also constantly looking for new ideas. Here are some approaches which trainers have found to be successful:

—Goal-fulfillment. When a trainer can find out (through individual interview or group discussion) why each participant attends and what he hopes to gain, he can keep the trainee interested by helping him move toward his goal.

—Discovery of sub-goals. It is inevitable that many things trainees practice or study seem to have little relationship to their ultimate goals. The trainer, therefore, must help trainees perceive the relationships of seemingly pointless activities to long-range purposes. Ideally, the trainer helps his trainees discover and set up sub-goals; as each sub-goal is attained, he reminds them how it inevitably leads to accomplishment of their main goals. For example, when helping adults learn how to read such words as "experience," "education," "references," the instructor could point out that these words are almost always found in job application forms, and that being able to read them will move the trainees toward their ultimate goal, getting a job. "The seeking of a long-delayed reward is made possible only by the establishment of sub-goals, each of which can be achieved with a much shorter delay," says Laurance F. Shaffer, Professor, Department of Psychological Foundations and Services, Columbia University.

—Variety. When a trainee realizes that different, interesting things happen in every training session, he is motivated to keep up his attendance. Yet the good teacher knows that variety is not enough . . . his films, audio-visual aids, guest speakers and other offerings must contribute to the individual student's learning and growth. Being different—just to be different—is not the answer.

—Ego-boosting. When adults and youth feel like they are just one of the mob—when they receive little or no individual attention, they leave the group, either

physically or mentally, unless their reason for attending is a powerful one. Elizabeth Drews, Associate Professor, College of Education, Michigan State University, said recently, "Teachers must show that they like their students, like doing things with them, value them and learn from them."

—Success. To become and stay interested in learning a skill or new facts, the student should experience the joy of success. It is up to the trainer to give every participant the chance to be successful—no matter on how limited a level. When a slow trainee learns to perform a simple task correctly, or feed back a correct answer, he is much more likely to want to continue learning. Continued failure is a killer of incentive to learn—particularly so with under-educated adult trainees who feel deeply their inability to study and learn and are extremely sensitive to failure, to appearing "stupid" or "ignorant."

FACTORS AFFECTING THE LEARNING PROCESS

Training starts with the instructor's first contact with the trainee (whether the relationship relates to a professional and novice or supervisor and subordinate), and the subsequent learning process goes on constantly from that moment onward. Some of the training will be unconscious (such as imparting attitudes, concerns, styles, etc.); some of the learning will be equally unconscious, and some is likely to be negative. Mistakes and failures in learning can often be traced to lack of knowledge, skills, proper habits, and constructive attitudes. These four deficiencies can often be overcome through good training. Since learning is an internal, personal thing, however, a trainer cannot assume (as many do) that because he has *taught*, the trainee has learned. Below are four items that are generally recognized as having an influence on the success of training.

—Assuming the ability to learn. Some excellent studies in the behavioral sciences indicate that the relationship between the teacher and the learner is so critical that, for the most part, students perform according to the instructor's expectations. Low expectations on the part of the trainer produce poor results; higher (but not unrealistic) expectations produce better results.

—Emotional involvement. The emotional condition of the learner is of great importance. Anxiety reduces learning. An overall feeling of inferiority, a temporary humiliation, a depression, anger, a feeling of being rejected and many other emotional situations diminish learning. The reverse is true: a feeling of well-being, and of being respected by others, stimulates the mind; increased willingness to participate is preparation for learning.

Most people want to have the sense of accomplishment that comes from work, or they want the job to be easy, or they seek material rewards for work. When the learner can relate learning to his personal needs, he is likely to do a good job.

We do not learn efficiently when resistance is present. Prejudice against, resentment towards, or hate of a subject, an activity or a person interferes with, or entirely obstructs, the learning process. Learning is furthered by the individual's being an active member of a congenial social group.

—The more vivid the experience, the more it may be remembered. We learn best when we play an active part in what is being learned. Though we may learn things from fear and shock, they may not be the things intended. A fear-and-shock approach is a dangerous training plan (if used outside of really hazardous situations), and is most likely to achieve conscious forgetting and create unconscious negative reactions to similar situations.

—Acceptance of responsibility. We learn (and hear) only what we are ready to learn (and hear). We learn most efficiently the content which we perceive to be related to our own purposes and interests. We learn best and retain content longest when we believe in what we are learning. A large measure of the instructor's work

is to relate the things to be learned to the learner in a relationship which is meaningful to the receiver. "Desire to learn" is a key phrase in the prescription for success.

Conditions for Learning

One useful way to view the proper conditions for effective learning is as follows:

1. *Motivation.* Motivations for people are varied and complex. Even when one concentrates on a single individual, the task of harmonizing his goals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits to be learned is difficult. Assumptions are dangerous. Diagnosis, through individual and small group discussions, and concentration on the means of achieving each individual's hopes and desires offer promise in training the disadvantaged.

2. *Appropriate stimulus.* Instruction that uses the most direct, realistic and visually apparent methods, equipment and situations produces best results with trainees who need to feel that what they are doing is "for real." Classroom lectures, inappropriate examples and "make work" often leads to student disinterest and frustration. The more closely the training simulates the work it is for, the more successful the trainees are likely to be in transferring learned skills to subsequent work situations.

3. *Response.* A chance to practice and show what he can do is important to the success of any trainee. The promise of an opportunity to show what he can do after graduation (many months hence) is not likely to motivate the disadvantaged trainee.

4. *Confirmation.* Frequent indication of how well the trainee is doing is important for his further progress. If the emphasis is placed on what is done right (instead of what answers are wrong, as usually has occurred in prior school experience), the confirmation becomes a type of reinforcement and reward. However, more than correct or incorrect responses is often needed. Feedback to the trainee should give some indication of *how* his performance deviated from the correct performance, and perhaps a discussion of what can lead to further improvement.

Some Principles of Learning and Remembering

1. *Interest and attention are critical.* A training program for the disadvantaged must relate the training to some personal goal, one that is attainable reasonably soon.

2. *We need a framework for learning.* The trainee needs to know, in general terms, what the training is "all about," in order to appreciate its relevancy and to be able to associate details. Books are titled and courses are named for this purpose. Analysis of details presupposes a grasp of the meaning as a whole.

3. *Learning takes place one step at a time.* If any job is broken down into precise tasks, it can be learned.

4. *Establish accomplishable goals.* This will help the trainee experience success and give him a reason for paying attention.

5. *Identify and/or establish a pattern.* Information can be better organized and recalled if a pattern is present. Some instructors tend to teach the last thing, rather than the first thing they learned. Teaching must follow a logical learning pattern.

6. *Lead from the familiar to the unfamiliar.* We learn by being able to associate a new unit of information with previously-learned knowledge. The effective instructor, therefore, organizes content to progress from familiar to similar, but unfamiliar, ground. Appropriate analogies help the mind travel from the known to the unknown.

7. *We learn by doing.* Learning, if effective, must be an active thinking process, for example, a trainee's mentally reviewing a chapter in a book immediately after reading it. The instructor must help the trainees to visualize and make associations; in skills training, he should have the trainee perform the operation learned.

8. *Use as many senses as possible (or as are applicable).* It has been estimated that people tend to retain 10% of what they hear, 20% of what they read, 30% of what they see, and 70% of what they do. Combinations generally produce best results; the more senses that are involved, the more learning that is likely to occur.

9. *Repetition aids learning when used appropriately.* Repetition of successful patterns can serve as useful reinforcement of learning and strengthen retention. Skills development is particularly dependent upon repetition. Repetition, however, may tend to obstruct learning and cause confusion if it creates resentment or boredom, is substituted for meaning, or is given to a learner before he is ready.

10. *Spaced learning can strengthen retention.* The instructor can provide frequent reviews of progress to assure adequate feedback and break up a learning cycle into absorbable units. Material to be learned is often advantageously broken into units. Units are separately taught, with time periods between units which are long enough to allow absorption but short enough to allow for carryover. The units are then "put together" in review sessions, so that the learner can grasp the total picture.

Warning—The fact that a trainee demonstrates the ability to explain an operation or concept may, or may *not,* be an indication he has learned the operation effectively. Disadvantaged trainees often have lived in a "verbal world," and are out of necessity quite skilled at masking their deficiencies. The facile talker may have only a knowledge of terms; he may be able to answer questions correctly, without really understanding their meanings or being able to apply the concepts or skills involved.

THE TRAINING PROCESS

The question, "How much training?" is succinctly answered for work oriented training problems by the following formula:

JOB REQUIREMENTS—(JOB KNOWLEDGE+SKILLS)=TRAINING NEEDS

The successful trainer follows the rule: "Plan your training and train according to your plan." And he thoroughly develops answers to questions such as these:

What is the job to be done?
What tasks are involved?[3]

[3] See NCSL Reference Files *Task Analysis for Training the Disadvantaged* and *How to Structure Job Tasks for Training the Disadvantaged.*

What knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits need to be developed by the trainee?
What real abilities and background are needed by the trainee before he can learn the required tasks?
What is the best way to perform the job?
What steps are required for training on this job?
What is the best order for and method by which to teach these steps?
What is the best way to prepare the trainees for the training?

On-the-Job Training Through the "Job Instruction Training" Method

World War II provided requirements for training of great numbers of people to perform work that was entirely new to them; they had to be trained rapidly and well. The four-step Job Instruction Training (JIT) plan described here was used successfully for training millions of people. This method proved so sound that it was still recommended in the 1967 *Training and Development Handbook* published by the American Society for Training and Development.

The four-step Job Instruction Training method is summarized below.

FOUR-STEP METHOD OF JOB INSTRUCTION

1. Preparation—to prepare trainee's mind to receive new information and ideas:
   a. State the objective.
   b. Stress the importance appropriately.
   c. Tell where the job fits into the overall picture.
   d. Find out the employee's previous experience related to this task.
   e. Make the employee feel at ease.
   f. Make use of the existing background.
   g. Tell where the trainee fits into the overall picture.
   h. Introduce the trainee to tools, materials, equipment and new words.
2. Presentation—set pattern in trainee's mind:
   a. Tell and show the trainee the job.
      1. Present one point at a time.
      2. Do so slowly and clearly.
      3. Relate the job to the trainee's past experience. (Association of ideas arouses interest.)
   b. Ask trainee to "use your hands and your mind":
      1. Have him tell you what to do, one point at a time.
      2. Have him tell you the key points and ask questions.
      3. If, as you are doing the job as he tells you, he makes an error, correct his error (as errors occur) and review the correct procedure.
3. Performance—help the trainee form correct habits:
   a. Have trainee DO and EXPLAIN the job while under supervision:
      1. Have him do the job, one point at a time, telling you in advance what he is going to do before he does it.
      2. Have him tell HOW and WHY.
      3. Let him ask questions, but help him RECALL what was told.
      4. Anticipate possible errors.
   b. Have trainee do job again, this time without telling about the operation. Ask "WHAT" and "HOW" questions.
   c. Have trainee repeat the whole job until he has learned.
4. Check and follow up—see if trainee has formed proper habits:
   a. Have the trainee do the job "on his own."
      1. Tell him what and how much to do.
      2. Tell him where to go for assistance and advice.
   b. Inspect job critically:
      1. Observe the trainees at early and frequent intervals.
      2. Taper off observation gradually.
      3. Encourage progressive learning.
      4. Use praise as appropriate.

What the Instructor Learns

There is an old saying that "by your students you'll be taught." We really understand a job when we can teach it to someone else. In addition to knowing and understanding the job, the instructor reaps some of the richest possible rewards. He has the satisfaction of helping people become productive. He learns a great deal about human nature. He can spark appreciation.

WHAT THE INSTRUCTOR SHOULD REMEMBER (REVIEW)

- No two people learn at the same rate. One student's experience and background in a particular subject may vary from a few weeks to many years in scope from that of another student. The trainer who recognizes these and other *individual* differences, and plans his instructing accordingly, will help each trainee approach maximum learning within his own capabilities.

- Mistakes and failures in learning can often be traced to the trainees' lack of knowledge, skills, proper habits, and constructive attitudes. These four deficiencies may be overcome by good training . . . but the trainer must not assume that because he has taught, the trainee has learned.

- People don't like to do work that lacks meaning; they deserve to know why the job is necessary.

- People fear exposure and ridicule. Don't ask questions which force a trainee "into a corner."

- Non-verbal forms of communication give indications of trainees' readiness to proceed with instruction.

- Nervousness may indicate concern for success and indicate a positive trait—but it blocks learning. Plan methods of reducing such tension.

- What the trainee already knows about the job (or information which relates to it) can be used as a foundation for "new material." Learn how much the trainees know—don't assume they know—don't force exposure of lack of knowledge.

- Trainees are *action oriented,* so prepare to get the "doing" as quickly as possible.

- Cooperation is earned. Develop ways for the trainee to gain confidence in your ability and willingness to help him.

- Job "language" is very often unique. Consciously avoid special jargon or nomenclature unless it can be explained then and there. Invite the trainee to share in this mysterious job language, for such knowledge creates the feeling of having been initiated and builds identification with the organization.

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